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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the barriers that deter students from completing a vocational program in Oklahoma high schools. The 2,173 program leavers and 1,000 school leavers who were in vocational education as eleventh graders during the 1981-82 school year were chosen as a representative sample and were surveyed to ascertain the one most important reason they were no longer in the vocational program. Survey instruments were mailed only to the students whose home addresses were known resulting in returns from 53 percent of the 505 surveyed students identified as program leavers and 29 percent of the 363 surveyed school leavers. The barriers to program completion most often cited by program leavers were personal reasons, especially (for females) "getting married" or (for males) "got a job." Other reasons for noncompletion included "didn't like the teacher," "class didn't train for jobs I am interested in," and "didn't like school." Since the administrative process of scheduling students into classes they want and need is the biggest barrier to completion of a vocational program, it was recommended that school administrators test innovative ways to schedule classes. One way would be to set a three- or four-year plan of study for entering high school students. Efforts to allow students to enroll in their first choice of courses and to receive challenging instruction also should be increased. In addition, the study recommended that schools look into the educational effects of high school seniors taking only enough courses to graduate. The study noted that the student records on program leavers and school leavers were often incorrect. An executive summary and 23 statistical tables are included. (KC)

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BARRIERS TO STUDENT COMPLETION OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Final Report

written by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BARRIERS TO STUDENT COMPLETION OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the barriers that deter students from completing a vocational program. The population was students who had been in a vocational program in the eleventh grade but were not in vocational education during the senior year. Three groups identified from the State Department student accounting system were studied. "School leavers" were identified as those who quit school before graduating. "Program leavers" were students who remained in school during their senior year but were not in a vocational program. "Transfers" were identified as students who had moved to another school.

Procedure and Results

A representative sample of school leavers and program leavers who were in vocational education as eleventh graders during the 1981-82 school year was surveyed to ascertain the one most important reason they were no longer in the vocational program. Survey instruments were mailed to the students' home addresses obtained from school principals. A second survey form was mailed to nonrespondents. A 53 percent return was obtained from the program leavers on which correct addresses were obtained. That return represents 12.7 percent of the 2,173 students identified as program leavers. A 29 percent return was obtained from the

school leavers, representing 10.8 percent of the 1,000 school leavers.

Respondents were compared to the population groups by sex, race, occupational division, and type of school (area school or high school) to see if these variables were related to the barriers identified. With regard to the program leavers, males were more likely to need required courses, were less likely to be interested in the vocational course they had been taking, and were more likely to have acquired a job which interfered with their vocational course than were female students. Other minor differences were noted and are indicated in the final report.

The major differences among the school leaver group were also related to sex of respondent. Female students were more likely to give reasons of marriage or personal problems while males more often stated they had acquired a job.

The barriers to program completion most often cited by these two groups are:

Program Leavers	School Leavers
1 Could not fit class into schedule	1 Got married
2 Other courses or activities were more important to me	2 Personal problems, (illness, etc.)
3 Didn't like the teacher or he/she was boring	3 Didn't like the vocational class
4 Needed too many required classes	4 Didn't like my teachers
5 Class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	5 Didn't like other classes but the vocational class was okay
6 Not interested in the course	6 Got an unrelated job
7 Class didn't offer a challenge	7 Received bad grades
8 Got a job--no time for class	8 Didn't like school
9 Don't need the credit to graduate	9 Teachers were not adequately prepared

It can be noted that the 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th barriers for program leavers relate to the class or teacher. The 3rd and 4th barriers for school leavers also related to class or teacher; however, their dislike of teachers include all teachers in general. The 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 9th

barriers for program leavers point out institutional or administrative barriers to program completion.

Because addresses could not be readily obtained for transfer students, 1980-81 eleventh grade transfers were "tracked" into 1981-82 vocational programs through the computerized student accounting system. There were 902 students identified in the student accounting system as transfers. Of the 759 who had social security numbers, 202 (26%) were located in a vocational program during the senior year. About 7 percent were in the same program.

It was noted that only 45 percent of the located students had transferred out of the school district they were in as juniors. The largest number of transfers, almost one-third of those located, left an area school program to return to a different program in their home high school. Because of the large number of transfers who were not in a vocational program during their senior year and the large number of those vocational students who were still in the same school district, it was estimated that over 600 of the students identified as "transfers" were actually "program leavers." Specific results are tabulated in the final report. Results have also been used to project program leaver and school leaver population estimates.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The administrative process of scheduling students into classes they want and need is the biggest barrier to completion of a vocational program. It is recommended that school administrators test innovative ways to schedule classes. One way, made possible by availability of computers, would be to set up a three or four year plan of study for

entering high school students. We recognize that adjustments would need to be made each year, but we also believe many students will know what they want and need throughout high school. If required courses, as well as multiple-hour classes and multiple-year programs, were identified, some of the scheduling constraints could be identified "up front." Possible scheduling problems could be recognized before they happen and perhaps dealt with before they become problems.

Mobility of the population results in a major barrier to student completion of a vocational program. No recommendations are offered to attack this problem.

The class itself and the teacher are barriers to completion. It is recommended that a study identify the percentage of students who are not in their first-choice program and that means be sought to improve the selection process so that students are enrolled in the "right" program. Teachers should continue to challenge students with competency-based programs using mastery learning to make programs more personally satisfying to students.

One conclusion of the study is that the number of program leavers and the program leaver problem is greater than student accounting system data had indicated. It is recommended that the student accounting system term "school" be further defined to mean either school site or school district. We would comment that students who leave the area school to return to their home high school are not transfer students.

A conclusion of this study is that many high school seniors are only "part-time" students--taking only enough courses to qualify for graduation. It is recommended that the practice of allowing students to attend school only when meeting a class needed for graduation be studied

for its effects on the students' education. Some questions in need of study are: What are the educational effects on students obtaining work release permits for jobs in which no formal educational activities have been agreed upon by the employer and the school? What would be the educational effects of calculating state aid on some combination of FTE and ADM rather than ADA?

Adjusting the Population

According to student accounting system records, as reported by the schools, there were 2,110 program leavers and 1,857 school leavers. According to the school office and the students themselves, 21 percent of the program leavers and 54 percent of the school leavers were miscoded. This is not to say that instructors were in error when they reported student status in October, 1982, although there was some error in reporting students who had made a change in enrollment from high school to area school or from area school to high school in the same district. Many students reported as transfers were still attending the same high school.

Status of students in this study were reported from the school office and from the students in early 1983. The reporting differences and the different results exemplify the dynamic changes in status over time.

Greatest differences between student accounting system records and our findings were in the school leaver group where over 500 students were estimated by this study to be enrolled in the same school district

but not in vocational education, and over 200 were transfers and not dropouts. The greatest difference found in the program leaver group was that, in early 1983, there were approximately 150 who were not program leavers but were school leavers. A complete breakdown of the adjustments made to those two groups and to the transfers is included in the report together with population estimates by type of barrier.

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BARRIERS TO STUDENT COMPLETION OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM AND DESIGN

Introduction

Almost 4,000 Oklahoma eleventh grade students who were in vocational education programs in the 1981-82 school year were reported to have quit the vocational program before they completed it. Many of them were school leavers, either during their junior year or before the beginning of the senior year. Over 55 percent of them, however, simply did not re-enroll in the program for their senior year although they were still in the same school.

There is much concern regarding the delivery of educational services to students such as these. Vocational educators are concerned that, with regard to the school leavers, the vocational program did not have the "holding power" we sometimes attribute to the vocational programs. We are concerned that the school leavers obtained marketable skills in their vocational classes which may encourage them to enter the world of work on a full-time basis before they graduate. There is also much concern regarding those who stay in school but do not complete the vocational program--the program leavers. Perhaps the program is not fulfilling their needs or perhaps the school system puts up barriers which the student cannot overcome, such as scheduling conflicts or graduation requirements.

There is also another group of students in vocational programs, perhaps as many as 600, who transfer from one school to another during their junior year. We have not tracked those students to see if they are able to continue their vocational program at their new school. Transfer students may not have serious problems enrolling in those subjects required for high school graduation but they may find serious barriers to continuing in their vocational program.

The Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education administers a student accounting system (SAS) which does track students from grade to grade within each school vocational program. It is evident from the student accounting system data that large numbers of students fail to complete their vocational program. The trend seems to be toward an increase in the number of such students, although the proportion of total vocational students may not be increasing.

Problem

The problem addressed by this study is the high attrition rate in vocational programs. The specific question of concern is why junior students fail to re-enroll in their vocational program in the senior year. The purpose of the study is to identify the barriers to continuing enrollment in the vocational program in the same school. There will also be an attempt to identify the extent of vocational program attrition due to transfer from one school to another.

Related Studies

A doctoral study completed by Ron Simmons in 1979 indicated that 77 percent of the Trade and Industrial Education (T&I) students in grade

eleven at area schools that year expected to re-enroll for the second year. Another 16 percent were undecided, and only 7 percent expected not to re-enroll in the T&I class. In actual fact, only 57 percent did re-enroll for their second year. Such discrepancy means that over 2,800 students who apparently intended to continue the program were unable to do so.

The major reasons given by that 7 percent of the students who did not plan to continue were: (1) conflicts in scheduling at the home high school, and (2) they did not like the program, the instructor, or the area vocational-technical school. No reasons were available for that 20 percent of the students who had planned to continue but did not.

The study included 1,370 high school juniors who were enrolled in T&I courses in nine area schools. It was considered to be fairly representative of the area school student population but, of course, was not intended to represent the high school T&I programs. One implied assumption of the study was that those who expected to re-enroll for the second year would do so; however, that assumption has proven to be incorrect.

A second study was completed by Charles Rury in 1983. This study had, as its sample, students from 22 of the DE/Marketing programs in high schools and area schools. The study obtained data from all students, i.e., tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. A conclusion of this study is that approximately 56 percent of the students are enrolled presently or intend to enroll for the second year of training. That statistic is rather meaningless since the sample does not include seniors who did not enroll for the second year. Therefore, 100 percent of the seniors in the study did re-enroll for the second year.

Tnese two studies emphasized the positive reasons why students enroll (or plan to enroll) in the second year of a two-year vocational program. The discrepancies in these studies between the percentage of students planning to enroll and the percentage of students who actually enrolled point up the unforeseen barriers which confront many students.

Design of the Study

The study was designed to make the greatest possible use of the Student Accounting System maintained by the State Department. The population was defined as those students classified as eleventh grade students during the 1981-82 school year who were in occupational training programs. The population does not include students in Comprehensive Home Economics, Coordinated Vocational Education and Training, or other special programs. The sub-population of concern were those students from the population who were classified by completion status reports in one of the following four categories: (1) transferred to another school, (2) transferred out of vocational education into an academic or general education program at the same school, (3) left school prior to completion but completed 50% or more of the program--not a known transfer, and (4) left school prior to completion, completed less than 50% of the program--not a known transfer.

Records were not available by which to locate the students who had transferred to another school. Therefore, a procedure was used to find out how many of the school transfers from the 1980-81 school year could be "tracked" through the Student Accounting System into a vocational program during the 1981-82 school year. Explanation of that process is in the results sub-section, "Study of Eleventh Grade Transfer Students."

The students in the three remaining categories formed two populations in this study and will be referred to as "program leavers" and "school leavers." The program leavers are those students who did not re-enroll in the vocational program in their senior year, did not enroll in any other vocational program, but did remain in the same school. The school leavers are those students who dropped out of school some time after they enrolled in the 1981-82 school year and before the 1982-83 enrollments and 1981-82 completion status data were reported in September, 1982.

A random sample of 33 percent was drawn from the program leaver and school leaver populations. Address forms listing the students drawn in the two samples were mailed to the appropriate school administrators in February, 1983, with a request that they furnish us with the last known address for each student listed. In most cases, the forms were sent to high school principals; however, in the case of students who had left area school programs, the letter was sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Programs or to the person whose title most nearly equated with that position. The administrators were also asked to verify that the students were categorized correctly as either school leavers or program leavers. An example of the address form and cover letter is exhibited in Appendix A. In all, 88 percent of the school principals responded to the address form. The nonrespondent principals represented only 3 percent of the students.

As addresses were returned in February, March, and April, 1983, survey forms were mailed to the students. A second mailing was made to all nonrespondents in May, 1983. The program leaver and school leaver populations and samples are displayed in Table I. As defined in the

TABLE I

POPULATIONS AND SAMPLES

	SAS Population	Original Sample	Recoded Sample	No Address or Undeliverable	Surveys Delivered	Usable Responses	Percent Response	Percent of Population
Program Leaver	2,110	701	@651	#146	505	266	53%	12.6%
School Leaver	1,857	618	&520	*157	363	107	29%	5.8%

@ Includes 44 students from the School Leaver population and excludes 94 students who were still in the program, transfers to another vocational program, school transfers, school leavers, or graduates.

Includes 75 students in schools that did not respond to the request for addresses, 20 students with addresses unknown, and 50 students whose letters were returned undeliverable.

& Includes 32 students from the Program Leaver population and excludes 130 students who were still in the program, transfers to another program, school transfers, still in school but not in vocational education, or graduates.

* Includes 34 students in schools that did not respond to the request for addresses, 48 students with addresses unknown, and 75 students whose letters were returned undeliverable.

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Student Accounting System, there were 2,110 program leavers and 1,857 school leavers. As a result of information obtained in this study, estimates were made of the "real" populations of school leavers and program leavers. These estimates, together with the data on returns, are presented in the results section of this report.

The populations from the Student Accounting System are displayed in Table II by occupational training division. It may be noted that the Trade and Industrial Education Division has a higher percentage of leavers and the Agricultural Education Division has a lower percentage of leavers than might have been expected. The data in Table II does, however, indicate that the problem this study addresses exists in all training divisions.

The Survey Instruments

A survey instrument was developed for each of the leaver populations. The instrument developed for use with those students who were program leavers still in school listed 21 possible barriers identified from the literature and space was provided for the respondents to list another barrier if they felt it necessary to express their opinions. The respondents were asked to check the one most important reason they were no longer in the vocational program.

The instrument developed for use by the school leavers listed 18 possible barriers with space for the respondents to add their own. As a result of the changes we had made in categorizing the students, a section was developed for those students who might still be in school. The purpose of that section was simply to identify additional students who had been classified as school dropouts yet were still in school. Addition of this section encouraged those students to respond to the survey.

TABLE II

POPULATIONS BY DIVISION

Division	Enrolled No.	%	Transfers No.	%	School Leavers No.	%	Program Leavers No.	%	Total Leavers No.	%	Leaver % of Division
Agri.	4,250	28	180	19	230	12	582	28	812	20	19
DE/Mark.	1,299	9	67	7	140	8	240	11	380	10	29
Health	349	2	19	2	55	3	22	1	77	2	22
Home Ec.	731	5	70	8	146	8	82	4	228	6	31
Office	802	5	55	6	64	3	131	6	195	5	24
T&I	7,046	46	477	52	1,126	61	893	42	2,019	51	29
CVE	762	5	59	6	96	5	160	8	256	6	34
TOTAL	15,239	100	927	100	1,857	100	2,110	100	3,967	100	26

Numbers Enrolled, School Leavers, Program Leavers, and Total Leavers represent 1981-82 eleventh grade students.
Number of Transfers represents 1980-81 eleventh grade students.
Leaver % of Division is obtained by dividing Total Leavers by Enrolled. Example: CVE 34% = 256/762.

Both instruments were field tested with high school students from Stillwater High School to assure that instructions and items were clearly expressed. Although eight items were intended to be duplicated on both instruments, the terminology was changed to better express a respondent in his/her present status as a student or as a nonstudent. The instruments and cover letters to the students are displayed in Appendix A.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation to this study is the assumption that the respondents do, in fact, represent the populations. That there may be differences between the respondents and the nonrespondents is in question. The technique of sampling the nonrespondents was not deemed feasible--particularly due to the characteristics of school dropouts. One could not hope to obtain 100 percent response from even a small sample; therefore, nonrespondent differences would still be in question. A sample consisting of 33 percent of the population was selected initially to assure that an adequate number of responses could be obtained. To accept that the results are valid, we still must assume that respondents and nonrespondents do not differ with regard to barriers to completion of the vocational programs.

An effort was made to support that assumption by comparing the population to the sample and to the respondents on characteristics for which data were available. Tables III through VI display results of chi-square comparisons by sex, type of school, race, and occupational division. No significant differences were found between the samples and the populations on any of these characteristics. Comparisons between the respondent groups and populations disclose school type and race

TABLE III

CHI-SQUARE COMPARISON OF SAMPLE AND RESPONDENTS TO THE POPULATION BY SEX

Group		Male	Female	X^2	Probability
Program Leavers:					
Population	Number	1,392	718		
	Percent	65.97	34.03		
Sample	Number	437	214		
	Percent	67.13	32.87	.06	.81
Respondents	Number	176	85		
	Percent	67.43	32.57	.09	.76
School Leavers:					
Population	Number	1,272	585		
	Percent	68.50	31.50		
Sample	Number	350	170		
	Percent	67.31	32.69	.07	.80
Respondents	Number	72	35		
	Percent	67.29	32.71	.07	.80

differences. The respondents were more often from area schools than expected, and were in the school leaver group. American Indians were underrepresented and Asians were overrepresented. When comparisons were made between Caucasians and minorities, however, there were no differences.

A second limitation relates to the number of respondents. There were 3,967 students identified initially as school or program leavers. There were 3,173 students remaining in the populations after adjustments

TABLE IV

CHI-SQUARE COMPARISON OF SAMPLE AND RESPONDENTS
TO THE POPULATION BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

Group		Area School	High School	X^2	Probability
Program Leavers:					
Population	Number	781	1,329		
	Percent	37.01	62.99		
Sample	Number	262	389		
	Percent	40.24	59.75	.45	.50
Respondents	Number	127	134		
	Percent	48.66	51.34	5.92	.015*
School Leavers:					
Population	Number	1,157	700		
	Percent	62.30	37.70		
Sample	Number	319	201		
	Percent	61.35	38.65	.04	.84
Respondents	Number	77	30		
	Percent	71.96	28.04	3.97	.046*

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

were made for changes in their leaver status. A respondent sample of 342 is necessary in order to estimate within 5 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence. A total of 373 usable responses were obtained, which increases our confidence in the findings. When we predict to the two populations separately, however, a sample of 325 is necessary to represent the 2,173 program leavers and a sample of 278 is necessary to represent the 1,000 school leavers. We obtained 266 responses from

TABLE V

CHI-SQUARE COMPARISON OF SAMPLE AND RESPONDENTS
TO THE POPULATION BY RACE

Group		Indian	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian	X^2	Probability
Program Leavers:								
Population	Number	178	206	33	1,676	17		
	Percent	8.44	9.76	1.56	79.43	.81		
Sample	Number	48	69	9	521	4		
	Percent	7.37	10.60	1.38	80.03	.61	.28	.99
Respondents	Number	18	32	3	208	0		
	Percent	6.90	12.26	1.15	79.69	.00	1.84	.77
School Leavers:								
Population	Number	155	160	28	1,496	18		
	Percent	8.35	8.62	1.51	80.56	.97		
Sample	Number	38	43	3	430	6		
	Percent	7.31	8.27	.58	82.69	1.15	.81	.94
Respondents	Number	4	8	3	88	4		
	Percent	3.74	7.48	2.80	82.24	3.74	11.74	.019*

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

TABLE VI

CHI-SQUARE COMPARISON OF SAMPLE AND RESPONDENTS
TO THE POPULATION BY OCCUPATIONAL DIVISION

Group		Vo-Ag	D.E.	Hlth.	HmEc	B & O	T&I	ICE	X^2	Prob.
Program Leavers:										
Population	Number	581	240	22	82	131	893	160		
	Percent	27.58	11.37	1.04	3.09	6.21	42.32	7.58		
Sample	Number	168	72	5	27	32	302	45		
	Percent	25.81	11.06	.77	4.15	4.92	46.39	6.91	.9	.99
Respondents	Number	57	24	2	13	12	141	12		
	Percent	21.84	9.20	.77	4.98	4.60	54.02	4.60	6.81	.15
School Leavers:										
Population	Number	230	140	55	146	64	1,126	96		
	Percent	12.39	7.54	2.96	7.86	3.45	60.64	5.17		
Sample	Number	68	40	15	41	22	307	27		
	Percent	13.08	7.69	2.88	7.88	4.23	59.04	5.19	.26	1.0
Respondents	Number	11	6	4	14	3	64	5		
	Percent	10.28	5.61	3.74	13.08	2.80	59.81	4.67	4.71	.58

program leavers which allows only a 91 percent confidence level in our estimations. We obtained only 107 responses from school leavers which allows a confidence level at 73 precent confidence. Results obtained on the school leavers must be used with extreme caution.

CHAPTER II

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to completion of vocational programs by high school students. Eleventh grade students who were enrolled in vocational programs during the 1981-82 school year were the focus of the study. Those who failed to re-enroll in the program for the 1982-83 school year, yet remained in school in no vocational program, were classified as "program leavers." Those who were reported as having left school without graduating were classified as "school leavers." A third population, drawn from the eleventh grade of 1980-81, were students who were reported as transfers to another district.

The program leaver and school leaver populations were sampled and the samples surveyed to determine the one main reason they were no longer in the vocational program. The transfer students were tracked into the 1981-82 Student Accounting System files to ascertain if they were still enrolled in a vocational program at the school to which they had transferred.

Table VII lists the populations of program and school leavers, the sample numbers, and the number and percent of respondents.

TABLE VII

PROGRAM AND SCHOOL LEAVER RESPONDENTS

Population	Population Number	Sample With Known Addresses	Respondents Number	Respondents Percent
Program Leavers	2,173	505	266	53%
School Leavers	1,000	363	107	29%

Barriers to Program Leavers

There were 266 usable responses obtained from the 505 survey instruments that were delivered through the mail. The response rate was 53 percent; however, the respondents represent only 12.2 percent of the identified population.

Table VIII is a display of all the responses to the survey. Forty percent of the students are categorized in three major areas: scheduling, importance, and attitude toward the teacher. Although we asked students to name the one most important reason they were no longer in the vocational class, the reasons are not mutually exclusive. It is therefore possible that, given a choice, other courses or activities were more important because the vocational class could not be worked into the schedule with those other classes or activities. It is important to remember that the results displayed here do not encompass all the barriers, but rather what the respondent felt was the major barrier.

An analysis was made to see if sex, race, occupational division, or type of school (area school or high school) was related to the barriers. Tables IX through XII display the responses categorized by those variables.

TABLE VIII

PROGRAM LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION

Barrier	Number of Responses	Percent	Rank
The cost of the program was too much	3	1.1	19
I could not work it into my schedule	42	15.8	1
Other courses or activities were more important this year	33	12.4	2
I needed too many required classes	19	7.1	4
My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses	4	1.5	16
My parents didn't want me in the program	5	1.9	13.5
I was not interested in the course	18	6.8	5.5
I didn't like the teacher or he/she was boring	31	11.7	3
The class was too hard	2	.8	22
The class didn't offer a challenge	17	6.4	7
I didn't like that class	3	1.1	19
The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	18	6.8	5.5
I got a job--have no time for class	15	5.6	8
Teacher asked me to drop the class	4	1.5	16
I don't need the credit to graduate	9	3.4	9
Peers in class made it hard for me	3	1.1	19
I was discouraged by bad grades	6	2.3	11
The class was not my first choice	2	.8	22
Health reasons	5	1.9	13.5
Don't know why I quit--wish I hadn't	2	.8	22
No way to get to/from school	4	1.5	16
Administration wouldn't let me re-enroll	6	2.3	11
Teacher was inadequately prepared	6	2.3	11
Other	9	3.4	*
TOTAL	266	100.3	

* The "Other" category is not included in the rankings because it represents nine different barriers.

TABLE IX

PROGRAM LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY SEX

Barrier	Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%
The cost of the program was too much	0	-	3	1.7
I could not work it into my schedule	9	10.3	33	18.4
Other courses or activities were more important this year	10	11.5	23	12.8
I needed too many required classes	2	2.3	17	9.5
My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses	0	-	4	2.2
My parents didn't want me in it	3	3.4	2	1.1
I was not interested in the course	9	10.3	9	5.0
I didn't like the teacher or the teacher was boring	13	14.9	18	10.1
The class was too hard	1	1.1	1	.6
The class didn't offer a challenge	5	5.7	12	6.7
I didn't like that class	1	1.1	2	1.1
The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	8	9.2	10	5.6
I got a job--have no time for class	3	3.4	12	6.7
Teacher asked me to drop the class	0	-	4	2.2
I don't need the credit to graduate	4	4.6	5	2.8
Peers in class made it hard for me	2	2.3	1	.6
I was discouraged by bad grades	1	1.1	5	2.8
The class was not my first choice	0	-	2	1.1
Health reasons	4	4.6	1	.6
Don't know why I quit--wish I hadn't	1	1.1	1	.6
No way to get to/from school	0	-	4	2.2
Administration wouldn't let me re-enroll	2	2.3	4	2.2
Teacher was inadequately prepared	4	4.6	2	1.1
Other	5	5.7	4	2.2
TOTAL	87		179	

TABLE X

PROGRAM LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY RACE

Barrier	White #	White %	Minority #	Minority %
The cost of the program was too much	2	.9	1	1.9
I could not work it into my schedule	34	16.0	8	15.1
Other courses or activities were more important this year	26	12.2	7	13.2
I needed too many required classes	15	7.0	4	7.5
My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses	3	1.4	1	1.9
My parents didn't want me in it	5	2.3	0	-
I was not interested in the course	15	7.0	3	5.7
I didn't like the teacher or the teacher was boring	25	11.7	6	11.3
The class was too hard	1	.5	1	1.9
The class didn't offer a challenge	16	7.5	1	1.9
I didn't like that class	3	1.4	0	-
The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	12	5.6	6	11.3
I got a job--have no time for class	13	6.1	2	3.8
Teacher asked me to drop the class	2	.9	2	3.8
I don't need the credit to graduate	6	2.8	3	5.7
Peers in class made it hard for me	3	1.4	0	-
I was discouraged by bad grades	6	2.8	0	-
The class was not my first choice	2	.9	0	-
Health reasons	5	2.3	0	-
Don't know why I quit--wish I hadn't	1	.5	1	1.9
No way to get to/from school	2	.9	2	3.8
Administration wouldn't let me re-enroll	4	1.9	2	3.8
Teacher was inadequately prepared	5	2.3	1	1.9
Other	7	3.3	2	3.8
TOTAL	213		53	

TABLE XI

PROGRAM LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY DIVISION

Barrier	T&I #	T&I %	Other #	Other %
The cost of the program was too much	1	.7	2	1.6
I could not work it into my schedule	21	14.8	21	16.9
Other courses or activities were more important this year	17	12.0	16	12.9
I needed too many required classes	14	9.9	5	4.0
My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses	4	2.8	0	-
My parents didn't want me in it	2	1.4	3	2.4
I was not interested in the course	6	4.2	12	9.7
I didn't like the teacher or the teacher was boring	14	9.9	17	13.7
The class was too hard	2	1.4	0	-
The class didn't offer a challenge	9	6.3	8	6.5
I didn't like that class	2	1.4	1	.8
The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	7	4.9	11	8.9
I got a job--have no time for class	8	5.6	7	5.6
Teacher asked me to drop the class	3	2.1	1	.8
I don't need the credit to graduate	7	4.9	2	1.6
Peers in class made it hard for me	1	.7	2	1.6
I was discouraged by bad grades	5	3.5	1	.8
The class was not my first choice	1	.7	1	.8
Health reasons	2	1.4	3	2.4
Don't know why I quit--wish I hadn't	1	.7	1	.8
No way to get to/from school	4	2.8	0	-
Administration wouldn't let me re-enroll	4	2.8	2	1.6
Teacher was inadequately prepared	3	2.1	3	2.4
Other	4	2.8	5	4.0
TOTAL	142		124	

TABLE XII

PROGRAM LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

Barrier	High School #	High School %	Area School #	Area School %
The cost of the program was too much	3	2.2	0	-
I could not work it into my schedule	24	17.9	18	13.6
Other courses or activities were more important this year	20	14.9	13	9.8
I needed too many required classes	7	5.2	12	9.1
My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses	2	1.5	2	1.5
My parents didn't want me in it	1	.7	4	3.0
I was not interested in the course	13	9.7	5	3.8
I didn't like the teacher or the teacher was boring	18	13.4	13	9.8
The class was too hard	1	.7	1	.8
The class didn't offer a challenge	6	4.5	11	8.3
I didn't like that class	0	-	3	2.3
The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in	14	10.4	4	3.0
I got a job--have no time for class	6	4.5	9	6.8
Teacher asked me to drop the class	1	.7	3	2.3
I don't need the credit to graduate	3	2.2	6	4.5
Peers in class made it hard for me	2	1.5	1	.8
I was discouraged by bad grades	2	1.5	4	3.0
The class was not my first choice	1	.7	1	.8
Health reasons	2	1.5	3	2.3
Don't know why I quit--wish I hadn't	1	.7	1	.8
No way to get to/from school	0	-	4	3.0
Administration wouldn't let me re-enroll	0	-	6	4.5
Teacher was inadequately prepared	1	.7	5	3.8
Other	5	4.5	3	2.3
TOTAL	134		132	

It can be noted that male students are more likely than female students to need required courses, are less likely to be interested in the vocational course, and are more likely to obtain a job which interferes with the class. With regard to race, it is noted that the vocational program is less likely to offer a challenge to white students than to minority students. White students are also more likely to believe the program trains for jobs that interest them. Students in Trade and Industry programs are more likely to need required courses, yet less likely to need the credit for graduation. Students in programs other than T&I programs are more likely to be uninterested in their course. High school students are more often uninterested in the course and in the jobs trained for in the course than are area school students.

The differences noted seem to have little impact since they are not noted among the three major barriers. Table XIII is a display of the nine greatest barriers in overall rank order. The table also ranks the barriers by sex, school type, division, and race. It should be noted that, regardless of the variable, the three major barriers are ranked or tied in rank as the top three barriers. It can also be noted that the first, fourth, ninth, and possibly the second barriers relate to institutional or administrative barriers to program completion. The third and seventh barriers and possibly the fifth and sixth barriers relate to the instructors, counselors, or others who have direct contact with the students.

TABLE XIII

RANK ORDERED MAJOR BARRIERS OF PROGRAM LEAVERS

Barriers	Overall Rank	By Sex		By School		By Division		By Race	
		Male	Female	AS	HS	T&I	Other	White	Minority
Could not schedule class	1	1	3.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other courses/activities more important	2	2	2	2.5	2	2	3	2	2
Didn't like teacher/boring	3	3	1	2.5	3	3.5	2	3	3.5
Needed required courses	4	4	13	4	6	3.5	8	5.5	5
Didn't train for jobs that interest me	5.5	7	5	12.5	4	7.5	5	8	3.5
Not interested in the course	5.5	8	3.5	9.5	5	9	4	5.5	6.5
Course offered no challenge	7	5.5	6	5	7.5	5	6	4	14.5
Got a job--no time for class	8	5.5	10.5	6	7.5	6	7	7	9.5
Didn't need credit	9	9.5	8	7.5	9.5	7.5	13.5	9.5	6.5

Barriers to School Leavers

There were only 107 usable responses from the 363 survey instruments that were delivered to the school leavers. The response rate was 29 percent--a good response from school dropouts--however, it represents only 10.7 percent of the population. Additional responses were obtained from students who were still in school, in another program, transferred, or graduated; therefore those responses were not used in this sample.

The data in Table XIV is a display of all responses from school leavers. The obvious barrier to program completion for this group is that they "dropped out" of school. The major reason given for leaving school was to get married. Almost 18 percent gave that reason. Other major reasons are because of personal problems, dislike of the vocational class, and dislike of teachers. Forty-five percent of the respondents used one of those four reasons for leaving school.

Data comparing the school leavers by sex, race, occupational program division, and type of school are displayed in Tables XV through XVIII. The major differences between the sexes were that females were much more likely to give reasons of marriage and personal problems than were males. Males were more often school leavers because they obtained a job not related to their vocational program. There were such small numbers of minority students that it is difficult to infer any difference between those students and white students. There were two common differences among divisions and types of school. Students in high schools and students in non-T&I programs were more likely to leave because of personal problems, while T&I and area school students were more likely to dislike the teachers.

TABLE XIV

SCHOOL LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION

Barrier	Number	Percent	Rank
I didn't like school	5	4.7	8.5
Didn't like other classes but vocational class was okay	6	5.6	6
Didn't like the vocational class	9	8.4	3
Got enough training to get a job	2	1.9	17
Got a job--not related	6	5.6	6
I was expelled	3	2.8	14.5
I didn't like my teachers	8	7.5	4
Counselor or principal gave me a hard time	4	3.7	11
Got bad grades	6	5.6	6
Got married	19	17.8	1
Joined the armed services	4	3.7	11
Couldn't get course I wanted	4	3.7	11
Not enough money for school	3	2.8	14.5
No way to get to/from school	3	2.8	14.5
School is too much work	1	.9	18
Have to stay at home to work or babysit	3	2.8	14.5
Personal problems (illness, etc.)	12	11.2	2
Teachers not adequately prepared	5	4.7	8.5
Other	4	3.7	*
TOTAL	107	99.9	

* The "Other" category is not included in the rankings because it represents four barriers.

TABLE XV

SCHOOL LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY SEX

Barrier	Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%
I didn't like school	1	2.9	4	5.6
Didn't like other classes but vocational class was okay	0	-	6	8.3
Didn't like the vocational class	3	8.6	6	8.3
Got enough training to get a job	0	-	2	2.8
Got a job--not related	1	2.9	5	6.9
I was expelled	1	2.9	2	2.8
I didn't like my teachers	3	5.7	5	6.9
Counselor or principal gave me a hard time	0	-	4	5.6
Got bad grades	0	-	6	8.3
Got married	14	40.0	5	6.9
Joined the armed services	0	-	4	5.6
Couldn't get course I wanted	0	-	4	5.6
Not enough money for school	1	2.9	2	2.8
No way to get to/from school	2	8.6	1	1.4
School is too much work	0	-	1	1.4
Have to stay at home to work or babysit	1	2.9	2	2.8
Personal problems (illness, etc.)	6	17.1	6	8.3
Teachers not adequately prepared	1	2.9	4	5.6
Other	1	2.9	3	4.2
TOTAL	35		72	

TABLE XVI

SCHOOL LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY RACE

Barrier	White #	White %	Minority #	Minority %
I didn't like school	5	5.7	0	-
Didn't like other classes but vocational class was okay	6	6.8	0	-
Didn't like the vocational class	6	6.8	3	15.8
Got enough training to get a job	2	2.3	0	-
Got a job--not related	6	6.8	0	-
I was expelled	3	3.4	0	-
I didn't like my teachers	6	6.8	2	10.5
Counselor or principal gave me a hard time	4	4.5	0	-
Got bad grades	3	3.4	3	15.8
Got married	17	19.3	2	10.5
Joined the armed services	4	4.5	0	-
Couldn't get course I wanted	4	4.5	0	-
Not enough money for school	2	2.3	1	5.3
No way to get to/from school	3	3.4	0	-
School is too much work	0	-	1	5.3
Have to stay at home to work or babysit	1	1.1	2	10.5
Personal problems (illness, etc.)	9	10.2	3	15.8
Teachers not adequately prepared	5	5.7	0	-
Other	2	2.3	2	10.5
TOTAL	88		19	

TABLE XVII

SCHOOL LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY DIVISION

Barrier	Trade & Industry #	Trade & Industry %	Other #	Other %
I didn't like school	4	6.2	1	2.4
Didn't like other classes but vocational class was okay	4	6.2	2	4.8
Didn't like the vocational class	6	9.2	3	7.1
Got enough training to get a job	2	3.1	0	-
Got a job--not related	4	6.2	2	4.8
I was expelled	1	1.5	2	4.8
I didn't like my teachers	7	10.8	1	2.4
Counselor or principal gave me a hard time	4	6.2	0	-
Got bad grades	4	6.2	2	4.8
Got married	8	12.5	11	26.2
Joined the armed services	2	3.1	2	4.8
Couldn't get course I wanted	3	4.6	1	2.4
Not enough money for school	1	1.5	2	4.8
No way to get to/from school	1	1.5	2	4.8
School is too much work	1	1.5	0	-
Have to stay at home to work or babysit	2	3.1	1	2.4
Personal problems (illness, etc.)	3	4.6	9	21.4
Teachers not adequately prepared	5	7.7	0	-
Other	3	4.6	1	2.4
TOTAL	65		42	

TABLE XVIII

SCHOOL LEAVERS BARRIERS TO PROGRAM COMPLETION
BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

Barrier	Area School #	Area School %	High School #	High School %
I didn't like school	3	3.9	2	6.7
Didn't like other classes but vocational class was okay	2	2.6	4	13.3
Didn't like the vocational class	9	11.7	0	-
Got enough training to get a job	2	2.6	0	-
Got a job--not related	5	6.5	1	3.3
I was expelled	1	1.3	2	6.7
I didn't like my teachers	7	9.1	1	3.3
Counselor or principal gave me a hard time	2	2.6	2	6.7
Got bad grades	3	3.9	3	10.0
Got married	14	18.2	5	16.7
Joined the armed services	2	2.6	2	6.7
Couldn't get course I wanted	3	3.9	1	3.3
Not enough money for school	2	2.6	1	3.3
No way to get to/from school	3	3.9	0	-
School is too much work	1	1.3	0	-
Have to stay at home to work or babysit	2	2.6	1	3.3
Personal problems (illness, etc.)	7	9.1	5	16.7
Teachers not adequately prepared	5	6.5	0	-
Other	4	5.2	0	-
TOTAL	77		30	

The nine highest ranked barriers keeping students from completing their programs and graduating from high school are listed in Table XIX. Personal reasons such as getting married, illness, obtaining a job or staying at home to work, and enlisting in the armed services account for almost fifty percent of the reasons students left school. These are often reasons over which the school system has no control. Reasons given by over fifty percent of the school leavers do, however, relate to barriers for which the school can take some responsibility.

TABLE XIX

RANK ORDERED MAJOR BARRIERS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

Barriers	Overall Rank	By Sex		By School		By Division		By Race	
		Male	Female	AS	HS	T&I	Other	White	Minority
Got married	1	6	1	1	1.5	1	1	1	5
Personal problems	2	2.5	2	3.5	1.5	10.5	2	2	2
Didn't like the vocational class	3	2.5	3.5	2	*	3	3	4.5	2
Didn't like my teachers	4	6	3.5	3.5	11	2	12.5	4.5	5
Didn't like other classes but vocational okay	6	2.5	*	13.5	3	7	7	4.5	*
Got an unrelated job	6	6	8.5	5.5	11	7	7	4.5	*
Received bad grades	6	2.5	*	8.5	4	7	7	13	2
Didn't like school	8.5	10	8.5	8.5	6.5	7	12.5	7.5	*
Teachers not adequately prepared	8.5	10	8.5	5.5	*	4	*	7.5	*

*Indicates that no respondent in that group selected that response.

Status of Transfer Students

There were 902 eleventh grade students on the 1980-81 SAS file who were identified as school transfers. The 1981-82 SAS file was searched to see if those students could be located in a vocational program in Oklahoma during their senior year. The social security numbers were used to match students from the two files; however, there were 143 of the 1980-81 students who had a computer-assigned number instead of a social security number. These were eliminated from the matching process, which left 759 students to match with 1981-82 enrollments.

The process of matching resulted in the identification of 202 students who were in a vocational program both years. Table XX displays the status of those 202 students in their senior year. Students from the class of 1979-80 were also "tracked" to the 1980-81 school year to see if results were similar across years. Those results are also displayed in Table XX.

It must be noted that, in the student accounting system, 1980-81 student status was reported at approximately the same time as 1981-82 student enrollments. It appears that 22 of the 1980-81 eleventh grade students identified as transfers were not identified correctly since they were still in the same school at the time our analysis took place. Those students may have been transfer students in October, 1981, and may have transferred back to the original school any time during the 1981-82 school year. Such activity would have been reported on supplementary enrollment reports.

It can be noted that over one-fourth of the transfer students do continue in vocational education at their new school and about 30 percent of those are able to enroll in the same program at their new school. It

TABLE XX

STUDENT TRANSFERS

Type of Transfer	1980-81 Number of Students	1980-81 % of 759	1980-81 % of 202	1979-80 Number of Students	1979-80 % of 819	1979-80 % of 204
Remained in the same school:						
in the same program	9	1.2	4.5	9	1.1	4.4
in a different program	13	1.7	6.4	8	1.0	3.9
Transferred from one school to another within a local school district:						
in the same program	3	.4	1.5	4	.5	2.0
in a different program	6	.8	3.0	6	.7	2.9
Transferred within an area school district from the area school to a feeder school:						
in the same program	3	.4	1.5	1	.1	.5
in a different program	63	8.3	31.2	75	9.2	36.8
Transferred within an area school district from a feeder school to the area school:						
in the same program	3	.4	1.5	2	.2	1.0
in a different program	12	1.6	5.9	5	.6	2.5
Transferred out of the district:						
in the same program	42	5.5	20.8	47	5.7	23.0
in a different program	48	6.3	23.8	47	5.7	23.0
Total in the same program	60	7.9	29.7	63	7.7	30.9
Total in a different program	142	18.7	70.3	141	17.2	69.1
Total students identified	202	26.6	100.0	204	24.9	100.0

is also interesting to note that only 45 percent of the located students transferred out of the school district. The largest number of transfers, almost one-third of those located, left an area school program to return to a different program in their home high school.

One may also note that students who moved across state lines may also be in a vocational program. It is safe to assume, however, that a large percentage of the transfer students do not complete their vocational program, nor do they change to another vocational program. One of the major barriers to completion of a vocational program may be the mobility of parents and of students.

Adjusting the Populations

When high school principals were asked for current addresses of the program and school leavers, they were asked to make corrections in the student status if it was different from the SAS records. So many changes were listed that we also asked students to verify that they were correctly categorized.

It should be noted that our survey was conducted during the second semester of the 1982-83 school year and that our respondents had been categorized in the student accounting system early in the first semester of that school year. There was a time differential of from four to six months in which student status could have changed. We deemed it important to estimate the population parameters for that period of time during which the survey was conducted since those were the populations to which inferences would be made.

The greatest change in status occurs in the school leaver group where over one-fourth of the respondents stated they were still in

school but were no longer in a vocational program. There were also a large number of both school leavers and program leavers who had transferred to another school. In all, over 12 percent of the sample were changed in status by the school principals and almost 23 percent of the respondents indicated a change in status.

A straight-line estimation technique was used to make adjustments to the populations. Table XXI displays those calculations. It is notable that the program leaver population remained about the same, i.e., changed only from 2,110 to 2,096; however, the school leaver population was reduced by over one-half, from 1,857 to only 987.

TABLE XXI

ADJUSTMENT OF THE POPULATIONS

Category	School Response N	School Response %	Student Response N	Student Response %	Total Percent Adjusted	Adjustment to Population (N=2,110)
PROGRAM LEAVERS:	(N=626)		(N=213)			
Still in program	8	1.27	2	.93	2.20	46
Never in program	10	1.59	2	.93	2.52	53
In another prog.	17	2.71	3	1.40	4.11	86
Transfer	9	1.43	7	3.28	4.71	99
School leaver	25	3.99	8	3.75	7.74	163
Graduate	6	.95	0	.00	.95	20
TOTAL	75	11.98	22	10.32	22.23	467
					Remaining in population:	1,643
					From school leaver population:	530
					TOTAL ADJUSTED PROGRAM LEAVER POPULATION:	2,173
SCHOOL LEAVERS:	(N=584)		(N=135)			(N=1,857)
Still in program	11	1.88	0	.00	1.88	34
Never in program	9	1.54	0	.00	1.54	28
In another prog.	15	2.56	3	2.22	4.78	88
Transfer	28	4.79	12	8.88	13.67	253
Program leaver	7	1.19	37	27.40	28.59	530
Graduate	7	1.02	5	3.70	4.72	87
TOTAL	76	13.01	57	42.22	55.18	1,020
					Remaining in population:	837
					From program leaver population:	163
					TOTAL ADJUSTED SCHOOL LEAVER POPULATION:	1,000

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify those barriers which keep high school students from completing a vocational program after they have entered the program. Eleventh grade students who were enrolled in a vocational program in the 1981-82 school year and who were identified by the student accounting system as program leavers or school leavers were surveyed to determine reasons they were not in the vocational program during their senior year. Students who were transferred from one school to another were also tracked through the student accounting system to obtain an estimate of the extent to which their moving is a barrier to completion of a vocational program.

Conclusions

The mobility of our population which results in students moving from one school to another is a major barrier to completion of a vocational program. Approximately one-fourth of the students who changed schools in the two years studied were still in a vocational program in Oklahoma. It can be assumed that a few others moved to another state and enrolled in vocational education; however, there are probably over 500 students each year who have moved to another school without continuing in a vocational program. Further, only about 30 percent of those who remain in vocational education are still in the same program.

The administrative process of scheduling students into classes they want and need is a major barrier to completion of a vocational program.

Many of the vocational programs require a three-hour unbroken block of time, which makes scheduling difficult. The difficulty is compounded in smaller schools where multiple sections of the one-hour classes are not feasible. The reason most often given by program leavers for discontinuing their vocational program was that it could not be scheduled. Other program leavers who stated other courses were more important, they needed required courses, or they didn't need the credit might have continued in their vocational program if it could have been scheduled.

One of the major barriers to completion of a vocational program is the program itself. Twenty-seven percent of the program leavers responded with some type of class barrier--from cost, interest, and difficulty, to initial choice. When one adds those responses identifying the teacher as the barrier, forty-two percent identified a class/teacher barrier to completion.

Many students leave the formal school setting before they have graduated. One of the barriers to completion of a vocational program is that it rests in that formal school setting, i.e., when the student leaves a school, he/she leaves the classes in that school. The primary reason many students leave school is personal. They marry, become ill, or perhaps are required by parents to stay at home with smaller brothers and sisters. A second reason relates to their interest in and ability to succeed in school. Almost one-third of the school leavers dislike school or specific classes, get poor grades, or are expelled. Other reasons include dislike of teachers or other school personnel and obtaining jobs.

One of the positive results of this study is that there are far less school leavers than previous data have indicated. There are also

fewer students who transfer across school district lines than may have been estimated. These conclusions and inferences of the study lead further to a conclusion that there are more program leavers than had previously been identified.

One conclusion of this study is that many high school seniors are only part-time students, apparently with the blessing and even encouragement of school administrators. Although the reason "didn't need the credit" was ranked only ninth for the program leavers, many comments were received from administrators, students, and parents which indicate that many students need as few as one or two credits in order to graduate. One placement counselor indicated that the practice of allowing students to enroll in less than a full schedule and to attend school only for those classes in which they are enrolled was the major barrier to completion of the vocational programs in his school district.

Recommendations

This being a descriptive study, there are no bases from the results for recommendations which would break down the barriers to completion of vocational programs. The study does document the barriers and the extent of impact those barriers have. Such documentation should be useful to those who would break down the barriers.

Based on our experience with this project, some recommendations are in order. It is recommended that school administrators test innovative ways to schedule classes, such as developing a two or three-year class schedule. We recognize that adjustments would need to be made each year, but we believe that many students who have been taught by the career education concept will have an idea of what they want and need

throughout high school. If required courses as well as multiple-hour classes and multiple-year programs were identified, some of the scheduling constraints could be identified "up front." In this computer age, there is no reason why longitudinal problems couldn't be recognized before they happen and perhaps dealt with before they become problems.

Obviously, the recommendation made above might not be feasible for all schools. There must be alternatives which do work. Perhaps a forum of school personnel charged with scheduling responsibilities would help to identify other alternatives.

It is recommended that teachers continue to make a great effort to challenge students and make their program more personally satisfying. At the same time, having documented several years ago that class selection is a major problem, we recommend that teachers, counselors, and administrators seek out improved selection processes which would assure that students are enrolled in the right programs.

It is recommended that the SAS definition of "school" be further defined to mean school site or school district. Less than one-half of the "transfers" in the SAS in 1980-81 had moved out of the school district. Many of the students were still enrolled in the same high school. It is further recommended, for purposes of student accounting, that students in an area vocational school be tracked back to the feeder high school for purposes of reporting student completion data. Many students were identified as school leavers or program leavers (from the area school) when, in fact, they were still in the same high school. Area vocational school staff need to be encouraged to recognize that they are an extension of the high school as far as high school students are concerned.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education and/or those responsible for policy regarding school attendance study the effect on students of an option which allows students to attend school less than a full school day. Such questions as: What are the educational effects on students obtaining work release permits to work in a job in which no formal educational activities have been agreed upon by the employer and the school? What percentage of students who are not in school the full school day do receive work experience throughout the time they are not in school? A question could also be raised concerning the educational effects of calculating state aid on some combination of FTE (full-time equalivance) and ADM (average daily membership) rather than ADA (average daily attendance). Such questions may not relate directly to the problem of this study; however, it would be useful to know if there is a relationship.

It is recommended that a study be conducted to identify the percentage of vocational students who are enrolled in a program which is not their first choice. Many students drop from a program because it doesn't meet their interests and needs. It may be counterproductive to enroll a student in a class which was not her/his first choice. "Filling classes" may not be compatible with filling vocational education needs.

We, as educators, need to continue to study the effects of various components of the educational delivery system so that sound management decisions are made which will positively affect student achievement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS AND COVER LETTERS

Votech
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
FRANCIS TUTTLE, DIRECTOR • 1515 WEST SIXTH AVE., • STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074 • A.C. (405) 377-2000

February 1, 1983

Dear High School Principal:

We need your help! Our records reflect a consistent decline in re-enrollment for vocational education. This decline is alarming and we are anxious to find ways to help remedy the problem.

The Research Unit of the State Department is conducting a study to determine the reasons why students fail to complete a vocational program. State staff are concerned because many students who enter a program at the 11th grade level fail to re-enroll for their senior year. This study should result in program planning which will better serve such students.

Attached is a list of randomly selected students who were in a vocational program in your school last year. We need their home addresses so that we may seek their voluntary responses to a survey instrument. Please have this list completed for us and return it in the enclosed return envelope.

Our authority for asking for this information is from the Privacy Act, Public Law 90-247; and specifically from the Code of Federal Regulations, parts 99.31 and 99.35. Please know that our responsibility for the protection of the privacy rights of parents and students is identical to yours. Responses will be kept confidential and will not be related to any individuals or to your school.

We hope to mail survey forms to students and former students before March 1, 1983. Your cooperation and timely response, therefore, will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Wm. D. Frazier, Ed.D.
Research Unit Coordinator

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

82-000704

STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ADDRESS FORM
1981-1982 ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Our records show the following students left the vocational program they were in last year without completing the program. Please list a mailing address for each student. If any record is in error and the student is still in a vocational program, please note that in place of the address.

Students who dropped out of school:

Name	Program	Mailing Address
Information in the Name and Program columns was filled in before forms were mailed to principals.		

Students who dropped out of the program but remain in school:

Mail in the enclosed envelope, no postage necessary, to:
Research Unit, 1500 West Seventh, Stillwater, OK 74074

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
FRANCIS TUTTLE, DIRECTOR • 1515 WEST SIXTH AVE., • STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074 • A.C. (405) 377-2000

February 20, 1983

What went wrong???

Our records show that you were in Diesel Mechanics class last year but did not enroll in the class this year. We feel that vocational education may have failed to help you. If we knew why, we could do better next time.

We need your help! Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey. Then mail the survey back to us in the enclosed envelope. No stamp is needed. All information will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used and your reply will not be given to your school.

Thank you for taking time to help us.

Don Frazier
Research Coordinator

Sheila Stone
Project Director

Lou Hendrix
Project Assistant

DF:rt

Enclosure

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

82-000704

SURVEY FORM
BARRIERS TO SENIOR ENROLLMENT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The only purpose of this survey is to find out the major reasons why students do not complete a vocational program. Listed below are a number of reasons. Please think about it and check the one most important reason why you are not in the vocational program you were in last year. If your reason is not listed, write in that reason in the bottom space.

1. _____ The cost of the program was too much.
2. _____ I could not work it into my schedule this year.
3. _____ Other courses or activities were more important this year.
4. _____ I needed too many required classes.
5. _____ My counselor encouraged me to get more college prep courses.
6. _____ My parents didn't want me in a vocational course.
7. _____ I was not interested in the vocational course I was in.
8. _____ I didn't like the teacher, or the teacher was boring.
9. _____ None of my friends are in the class.
10. _____ The class was too hard.
11. _____ The class did not offer a challenge.
12. _____ I didn't like that class.
13. _____ The class didn't train for jobs I am interested in.
14. _____ I got a job and don't have time for vocational class.
15. _____ Teacher asked me to drop the class.
16. _____ I don't need credit in the vocational class in order to graduate.
17. _____ My friends kidded me about being in the class.
18. _____ Others in the class made it hard for me.
19. _____ I was discouraged by bad grades.
20. _____ Course was not offered this year.
21. _____ This class was not my first choice.
22. _____ Other: _____

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING PROMPTLY!

MAIL THIS FORM IN THE ENVELOPE THAT CAME WITH IT. NO STAMP NEEDED.
Research Unit, 1500 West Seventh, Stillwater, OK 74074

SURVEY FORM
BARRIERS TO SENIOR ENROLLMENT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Answer only if you are not in school:

The only purpose of this survey is to find out the major reasons why students do not complete a vocational program. Listed below are a number of reasons. Please think about it and check the one most important reason why you are not in the vocational program you were in last year. If your reason is not listed below, write in that reason in the bottom space.

1. _____ I quit school because I didn't like any of it.
2. _____ Didn't like my other classes but the vocational class was okay.
3. _____ Didn't like the vocational class I was in.
4. _____ I got enough training to get a job so I got one and quit school.
5. _____ I got a job not related to my vocational training.
6. _____ I was expelled.
7. _____ I didn't like my teachers.
8. _____ Counselor or principal gave me a hard time.
9. _____ Got bad grades, so I quit.
10. _____ Got married.
11. _____ Joined the armed services.
12. _____ Couldn't get the course I wanted. (name course: _____)
13. _____ Not enough money for school.
14. _____ No way to get to/from school.
15. _____ Friends don't go to school.
16. _____ School is too much work.
17. _____ Have to stay at home to work or babysit.
18. _____ Personal problems. (illness, pregnancy, etc.)
19. Other: _____

Answer if you are still in school:

Please check one of the answers below:

1. _____ Your records are wrong. I am in the same school as last year.
2. _____ Transferred but the vocational class was filled. I couldn't enroll.
3. _____ Transferred and the vocational class isn't offered here.
4. _____ Transferred but not interested in the vocational class I was in before.
5. _____ Transferred and still in the same vocational class.

MAIL THIS FORM IN THE ENVELOPE THAT CAME WITH IT. NO STAMP NEEDED.

Research Unit, 1500 West Seventh, Stillwater, OK 74074

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING PROMPTLY!

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
FRANCIS TUTTLE, DIRECTOR • 1515 WEST SIXTH AVE., • STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074 • A.C. (405) 377-2000

April 8, 1983

PLEASE - - HELP!!

Within the past month we sent a survey form to you asking why you aren't in the vocational class you were in last year.

We haven't heard from you!

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey form and then mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope. No stamp is needed.

We really are counting on you. Your response will not be given to your school and your name will not be used so please just "tell it like it is."

Thank you for helping!

Don Frazier
Research Coordinator

Sheila Stone
Project Director

Lou Hendrix
Project Assistant

Enclosures

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

82-000704

APPENDIX B

POPULATION ESTIMATIONS

TABLE XXII

PROJECTED POPULATION ESTIMATES BY BROAD BARRIER

Barrier	% of Population	# in Population
PROGRAM LEAVERS:		
Scheduling	39.5%	857
Class (interest, need)	26.3%	571
Teacher	15.4%	334
Other people (counselor, parent, peers)	5.6%	122
Job	5.6%	122
Other unclassified	7.5%	163
TOTAL	99.9%	2,169
SCHOOL LEAVERS:		
Personal reasons	35.5%	355
School (dislike, grades, expulsion)	31.8%	317
People (teacher, counselor, principal)	15.9%	158
Job	7.4%	74
Other unclassified	9.3%	93
TOTAL	99.9%	997

TABLE XXIII

PROJECTED POPULATION STATUS OF TRANSFERS

Status	Percent	Number	Number in Vo-Tech	Number of Prog. Leavers
Still in same school, not a transfer	10.9%	98	22	76
Still in the same school district	44.6%	401	90	311
Transferred from the school district	44.6%	401	90	311
TOTAL	100.1%	900	202	698